18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to a host of friends for their guidance, suggestions and insights which have made the writing of this dissertation possible.

The advice and encouragement of Professors Alexander Spoehr, Leonard Plotnicov and Keith Brown helped to conceptualize the problem to be studied, and the approach to be taken in dealing with the study.

The names of a few Ibans and Chinese are contained in the body of the paper, and to them and the many more who shared their knowledge but must remain anonymous I express my deep appreciation.

Mr. Benedict Sandin, Curator of the Sarawak Museum, offered a number of valuable leads, particularly on the incipient class structure and political leadership among the Ibans. The Assistant Curator, Mr. Lucas Chin, and the Archivist, Mr. Loh Chee Yin, made available the abundant resources of the Archives on my several flying visits to Kuching.

To my wife, Joanne, who read each draft, and to friends who offered criticisms and suggestions, I am most grateful. Finally, to Miss Tnay Yong Hua, who spent long hours mimeographing the paper in its first stages, I give my thanks. The responsibility of all translations and material contained herein is my own.

657 Ibans who want to travel to Limbang, places where hundreds of
484 them have gone because of the high wages, must obtain facility passes
[464] from the District Office in order to enter Brunei en route to the other places. When a large number of Ibans, i.e., twenty or more, want to travel as a group to another part of Sarawak, e.g., to Simanggang, they must obtain permission from the District Officer who is charged with the welfare of residents living in his area.

657 Records of all Iban cases heard by a pengulu have been entered
631 in the "Dayak Report" since 1934 up to the present. Each pengulu is required to submit an account of his travels and an appraisal of conditions existing in each longhouse visited, during his raun that are made, theo-
[659] retically, twice each year and on special occasions. The Office is custodian of the "Pengulu Tin System," a set of boxes lettered from "A-G" containing a directory of all longhouses and a census of each.[13] All guns owned by Ibans must be licensed in the District Office where ammunition is sold, fresh shot-gun cartridges being sold upon submission of discharged casings.

---

[127] [13] The tins contain censuses conducted in 1958-9, 1966, and 1970, and are a valuable source of information about the residence patterns of Ibans and the fragmentation and evolution of longhouse communities.

592 the kin-group (suku-juru) of the child, providing a means of distinguish-
553
789 ing members of groups who were notoriously poor farmers or who had the ability to put a hex on people or padi (tau' tepang).[3]

592 A. Composition of the Bilik-Family

Although the bilik-family is a relatively enduring group, its genealogical composition changes over time as indicated in Table 18.[4] In 95 per cent of 1051 bilik-families on which data were collected, the composition was either that of a nuclear family (FaMoCh) or of a stem family (FaMoChCh). Nuclear families occurred in 596 cases, or 56 per cent of the total sample. Stem families were found in 400 cases, or 38 per cent of the sample. Fifty-two cases of individuals or couples living alone were found, a majority of the former being either widows or widowers living in the same house as a sibling or child. Of the couples living alone, 38 out of the 42 such cases were as yet childless young people who had moved from one of their natal bilik, and the other four cases were old people whose children had moved away, either because of marriage or employment.

---

[3] Such persons can curse a person or padi-field, simply by speaking of the person or thing, according to Iban tradition.

[4] The data for the years 1960 and 1966 were taken from censuses in the Pengulus' Tins kept in the Sibu District Office. The information for 1970 was taken in part from the Preliminary Census, and in eight cases, collected by the writer.

[See page 254--Analyst]

Within the past decade the Iban population in the Sibu pasar and its environs[1] has increased almost ten times. From a resident Iban population in the Sibu Urban area of 693 in 1960, the population has increased to more than 5,000 Iban residents (including the Field Force and their families) at the present time.[2] Whereas the Iban residents formed just over two per cent of the urban population in 1960, today they comprise a little more than eight per cent.[3]

There is little reason to anticipate a decline in the in-migration of Ibans to Sibu, whether on a temporary or more permanent basis. Rather, given the generally poor soil conditions that exist in many areas; the unpredictable climate with unseasonable flooding as in August, 1971; the firm belief of the indigenous population that double-cropping of padi will not work;[4] the problems of hunger in many upriver areas and the

---

[1] Although administrators decline to include the Lanang Road Field Force in their consideration of the Iban population of Sibu, the exposure to and effects of the urban center as a type of adaptation upon members of the Field Force and their families are incontrovertible. A similar situation obtained from the Sarawak Rangers and their families before their move to the new camp at Oya Road which in itself is becoming a new pasar.

[2] A principal difficulty encountered in carrying out this study of the Sibu Urban area was the lack of census data. Because of the greater importance attached to political affairs in Western Malaysia, according to a senior official in Kuala Lumpur, the census data for those states have been processed first, and after the completion of that work the data for Sarawak will be processed.

[3] We have mentioned the movement of one entire longhouse community from Sungai Jih to Sibu following a terrorist attack on their home. Other groups and individuals have added substantially to the Iban population in Sibu.

[4] That double- and triple-cropping will work if carried out as a community activity has been demonstrated by agriculturalists.